

Standard USG-1: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the United States government—its origins and its functions.

USG-1.4 Compare the characteristics and the advantages and disadvantages of confederal, federal, and unitary systems, including how power is distributed, shared, and limited in these systems. (P)

Taxonomy Level: 2.6-B Understand Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

There has probably been insignificant exposure to the structure and function of these governmental systems. Students will have had limited encounters with the Articles of Confederation, the federalism of the Constitution, and the Confederate government during the Civil War. The connection between the structure of these governmental systems and these historical examples will have been superficial. (4-4.1; USHC 2.3; USHC 4.2)

It is essential for students to know the differences in the structure of these governmental systems especially how those structures relate to the exercise of power in governance. Given case studies students should be able to examine the characteristics of a governmental system and identify it as confederate, federal, or unitary. They should also be able to determine which system would be most/least effective in handling the various responsibilities that governments face.

It is not essential for students to identify those nations that utilize each system today or have operated under such a system in the past.

Assessment Guidelines:

The objective on this indicator is to compare confederate, federal, and unitary systems of government. Suitable assessment would include having students examine contemporary examples and/or case studies of government and defend whether the government in question is confederate, federal, or unitary. Students should be able to classify governments based upon a study of these characteristics. It is justifiable that students should be able to distinguish the characteristic of these systems and to apply these characteristics in an operational sense. For example, given a “real-world” situation such as military mobilization, students should be able to defend which system could best address that situation.